{ See Note at end. }

UNITY

CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT,

FOR

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

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MISSIONARY WORK IN UNITARIAN CHURCHES.

THE NEED; CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS; PRACTICAL METHODS.

BY J. T. SUNDERLAND.

"Freely ye have received; FREELY GIVE."—*Jesus.*

"If as Unitarians we have any place at all in the great moving host of Christendom, our part IS IN THE VAN.—*Richard A. Armstrong.*

THE UNITARIAN PROSPECT.

Though Unitarianism is, in a sense, as old as Jesus, or Isaiah or Abraham, what is commonly understood as the "Unitarian Movement" is new. Ours is among the youngest of the denominations of the land. Indeed, we are only just fairly entering upon our career, especially in the West.

What is that career to be? Will it be important, or unimportant? Will it be enduring, or transient? Evidently a most extraordinary opportunity opens before us. Will we prove equal to it, or will we fail? And must others rise up to do what we undertook, but could not accomplish?

The key that can unlock the deep mystery of these grave questions may not be in our sight now; but I cannot help thinking it will some day be seen to have lain in the one word, "Missionary." Is ours to be a missionary faith? Then we may be sure it has a great future. Is it to be non-missionary? Then what promise for the future can it have?

Said Max Müller, in his well-known lecture on "Non-Missionary and Missionary Religions," delivered in Westminster Abbey: "Let us look at the religions of

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mankind in which the missionary spirit has been at work, and compare them with those in which any attempt to convince others by argument, to save souls, to bear witness to the truth, is treated with pity or scorn. The former religions are alive, the latter are dying or dead."

Is there not here a lesson which we should lay to heart? Not that Unitarianism will die in a day, if it is not animated by the missionary spirit. On the contrary, it will probably continue for a considerable time; make some little growth, very likely, as the result of the growing liberality of the modern world; do some little good in various ways while it lasts; and fill a place in the religious world not wholly unimportant. But this is probably as much as we can say. If it is to be non-missionary we may be sure it will rise to no commanding place among the religious forces of the future. It will become the religion simply of a class, and a small class. Its churches will tend more and more to become clubs of a select few, who will meet once on Sunday for purposes somewhat intellectual, somewhat social, somewhat æsthetic, and somewhat, but not *overmuch*, religious; and sooner or later it will pass away, because there will be no vital need for it. Nor when it does so will it be much mourned or missed. A religion whose faith is not of a kind sufficiently vital to impel those who hold it to impart it to others, is not greatly needed even by its possessors.

If, on the other hand, however, Unitarianism shall become early and thoroughly a missionary faith: if we, into whose hands it is committed by the great Providence over us, in these the early and formative years of its history, shall stamp it with earnestness, self-sacrifice and devotion, and go forth to the dissemination of it with the zeal and self-forgetfulness which its rational, pure and uplifting principles warrant, I can hardly conceive any limit to the good which it may do, or any bounds to the grandeur of the career which the future seems to open for it.

A MISSIONARY GOSPEL.

I do not think any religion ever had a more inspiring gospel to carry to men than Unitarianism has. Indeed, I believe it to be the highest, the best religious word that has ever yet been spoken to the world—in the first place, the most thoroughly reasonable, and in harmony with the finest thinking and the largest knowledge; and then, more than that, the most full of hope, of light, of uplook and outlook, of comfort in sorrow, of consolation and strength in view of death, and of noble incentive in life.

Of the different great religions of the world no one of us, probably, doubts that Christianity is the highest. But Unitarianism plants itself upon what is highest in Christianity. What *is* highest in Christianity? What, if everything else had to be thrown away or lost, would every thinking, devout soul cling to longest? What did Jesus himself declare to be the most precious teaching of all he had to utter? The thought of the divine humanity: man, the child, God, the parent: the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of the race. In this greatest conceivable of thoughts, God and man unite in nature, interests, destiny. "I and my Father are one." "No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." It is this lofty and inspiring faith, interpreted in the light of our modern age of unchained reason and growing knowledge, that constitutes Unitarianism.

It is easy to see that we have here a gospel for every class, and for every man. This gospel comes to the ignorant, to bring knowledge—knowledge which is safety and life.

It comes to the superstitious, to bring rational views of the world, and life, and God, and thus drive away a thousand hurtful shadows out of men's minds.

It comes to the sensualist—to him who lives for material aims and low gratifications, to say, "Shame! This is a beast's life you are living. Leave it. Your nature is too noble, your possible destiny is too high, for such degradation."

It comes to the conscious wrong-doer, saying, "Stop. Turn. Cease to do evil; learn to do well. Know that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

To the poor it comes and says, "Ye are God's children, even if ye are man's poor. Be comforted, therefore; and take all the more earnest heed concerning riches of the mind and heart and character, which no misfortune can take from you."

To the outcast it comes, and with infinite tenderness whispers, "God loves you. And not because another has died for you, either: He loves you for yourself. Therefore become worthy of his love."

To the despairing it comes, and bids him be of good cheer, for there is eternal hope.

It comes to the bereaved, in low sweet tones, to chant:

"There is no death; what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portal we call death."

It comes to little children, not to shadow their young lives with dreadful thoughts of God, and death, and judgment, and fiery pits, and lost souls; nor to say to them, "Your nature is wholly depraved; you are the children of wrath; you cannot love God until a new nature is given you." It comes to them to take them lovingly in its arms, as the Master did, and bless them.

To the multitudes in our day who are turning away from the current Christianity because of its irrational, cruel, degrading dogmas (of Bible infallibility, election, reprobation, vicarious atonement, eternal hell), it comes, to win them back to religion by showing them a religion reasonable, purged from these dark doctrines, worthy of the respect of every intelligent and free mind, and having a right, by reason of its intrinsic beauty and worth, and its helpfulness to men, to claim the acceptance and love of every man and woman.

It comes to all men, rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned, to warn them solemnly of hell—that hell which all are in danger of—the awful hell which hate, and selfishness, and lust, and pride, and passion, and sin of every kind make in the soul where they reign; and also to all men it comes to woo them to heaven—the beautiful and real heaven which love, and trust, and forgiveness, and patience, and purity carry into every human heart where they make their abode.

A GREAT TRUST.

Thus we see that the religion which God has committed to us, to foster and to disseminate, possesses the first and most important requisite for missionary activity—a real Gospel, and a Gospel for all. If, then, it shall fail to become a missionary religion, the reason will not be because the religion is not worthy; it will be because *we* are not worthy; we are unequal to the great and solemn trust placed in our hands.

Will we prove unequal to our trust? Our enemies say we will. And it must be confessed that our past history is not assuring, Yet, nothing is more unsafe than the conclusion that what has been must necessarily always be. There has to be a beginning to every new development, every new advance. Certain considerations, which will be mentioned later, seem to give ground for faith that as the grandeur of our Unitarian mission is more and more revealed to us, with the ongoing of the years and the unfolding of events, we shall rise to our opportunities, and in the strength of God

go forward to greater things than many of us yet dream.

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF MISSIONARY SUCCESS.

This brings me to the large and very practical question which I have had chiefly in view in undertaking this paper—that of methods, conditions, means. —How is this which we desire, to be accomplished? What can we do to become successful missionaries? What ways and means can our churches and ministers employ most effectually to spread this new gospel which has been committed to us, and which seems to us capable of doing so much for the higher life of men?

HEART IN THE MATTER.

As looking in the direction of a reply, I may say, in a general way: Plainly, the first thing necessary is *heart in the matter*. All possible questions about methods or agencies are subordinate to this. We must *want* to spread our faith. We must so deeply realize its value, and care so unselfishly for others, that we cannot rest until we share with them its precious hopes, girdings, comforts, inspirations.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

As a second sort of general answer, I may say, also, it is necessary to understand that it will not spread itself, or be spread by any chance influence, if we, who are responsible for it, fail to do our duty. This may sound like a truism; but there are a great many who make a mistake here. They have the idea that things will come out about right anyhow, whether individuals do their part or not. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Nothing ever comes out right in this world, in the realm of human conduct and life, where man is responsible, only as men do their duty, and thus make it come out right. Sometimes it is felt that we may fold our hands and be indifferent, because the spirit of the age—Matthew Arnold's *Zeit-geist*—sets in the direction of Liberal religious thought, and the future will be Liberal anyhow. But if the spirit of the age sets toward Liberal religion we may be sure it is because, and only because, men somewhere have not been indifferent—it is because, and only because, scores and hundreds of earnest, strong, clear-brained, sincere men in this and other lands have been persistently thinking in the direction of Liberal religion, and then fearlessly uttering their thought—and thus *creating* a Liberal religious spirit. And it will be the same in the future. I do not say that the world never drifts; but I do say that, if it ever drifts, it is not upward, but downward. The divinely appointed way for society to advance, and the world to grow better, is by the earnest and persistent effort of wise and good men who see the better thing, and urge and press and shame and drive and allure and push and lift the world up to it. To learn this and take it to heart is a necessary preliminary step, if any body of people are to become missionaries.

But these are only very general answers to the question before us. A more definite answer is important.

The specific things to be attended to, more effectually to spread the Gospel of Unitarianism, are many.

EDUCATION.

To begin with what is most remote, or least direct, it should be borne in mind always that whatever tends to promote education, diffuse knowledge, increase the intelligence of men, tends, in a measure, to help on our cause. At least it makes the conditions favorable. We may well, therefore, not only as philanthropists and lovers of our kind, but as persons desirous to build up Unitarianism, do what we can to foster schools, colleges, libraries, science—everything

that promotes the enlightenment of mankind.

RECOMMENDING OUR RELIGION BY OUR LIVES.

Quite as important to be thought about is the private life we are living and the character we are bearing as individual Unitarians. It will be of small avail for us to preach Unitarianism with our lips, or put forth efforts to spread a knowledge of its thought, unless we who profess it and stand before the community as its representatives, are pure, upright, useful men and women, who recommend it by what we *are*. The same thought applies to our churches. If our churches are really fountains of beneficence, schools of virtue, homes of sincere brotherliness and genuine piety, they will recommend the religion they stand for by their very excellence. Their very existence in the community will do something to propogate Unitarianism in that community. Set up a light and it will shine. But a stone cannot shine, though it try never so hard. If, therefore, we want the light of Liberal Christianity to shine through society, let us see to it, as something of first importance, that both the churches, and the men and women, that represent it, are not opaque objects, but luminous with virtue, goodness, piety.

BUILDING UP OUR HOME CHURCHES.

Thus we see that missionary work is not necessarily something afar off. It can be carried on at home; nay, to be effective, an important part of it must be carried on at home. We need to understand that zeal and faithfulness in sustaining one's own church has an important missionary quality in it. No person can regularly attend church without its having an effect upon others, or stay away from church without influencing others. When a community see a zealous church they inquire what it is about, and are very likely themselves to grow interested. Fire kindles fire. When Sunday morning comes and we are trying to decide whether we shall go to church or not, we are very apt to ask the question, What good can we *get* by it? and stop there. We ought always to ask the further and quite as important question, What good can we *do* by it? We ought to attend church, and sustain a church—the church which we believe to be true—not only for our own sake but for others' sake. If we believe in the principles of Unitarianism and don't identify ourselves with any Unitarian society, we wrong the community by failing to bear witness before it to the higher truth which we have found. We thus fail to do what we might do, and ought to do, to help its men and women themselves to find the same precious truth. We ought to be index fingers to them to point the way upward; and are not.

And if we belong to a church, but are derelict in our duty to it, we wrong the community, because by our neglect we make our church just so much weaker and less influential than it ought to be; while at the same time we convey the impression to those who know us that we esteem the religion it stands for as a very unimportant matter, else we should be more faithful in attending to our church duties. No, if we ever want Liberal Christianity to grow and spread, we must understand better than some of us now do, the importance of zeal and fidelity in our own church life. Propogandism must begin at home. We must make our own churches strong, our own church life active. We must understand that every dollar we give for the cause at home does something to strengthen the cause to the ends of the earth; and every dollar that we withhold at home, which we ought to give, does something to weaken not only our own church but through it all other churches. And every

time we go to church, especially on a rainy Sunday, or when the temptation is strong to stay away, and every time we put hand and heart into church work in any form, we are not simply helping to sustain the local society, but we are helping to make it influential in the community, and beyond, and therefore strengthening the cause everywhere.

And yet, when this is all done, it is only the beginning.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

We must not only make our own individual lives pure and noble, so that what we *are* shall give weight to what we *say* (this is the first step); and make our churches vigorous, active, financially strong, well-attended, real schools of virtue, fountains of beneficence, homes of piety, institutions which, by their life, zeal, and excellent fruits, will in some measure attract attention, and win favor in the community, and make the Unitarian name generally respected, (this is the second step); but we must go far beyond all this. If we would be a missionary body worthy the name, we must plan to do other work besides that which has *ourselves* primarily in mind. We must open our eyes to the multitudes everywhere who know nothing about our religion, who will never come to see us, and can never be reached but by our going to them; and the other multitudes who know that our religion exists, but have false ideas as to what it is, and violent prejudices against it, and can never be set right unless by earnest efforts on our part.

There is no missionary spirit that does not hear voices like that which came to Paul: "Come over into Macedonia and help us." There is none that does not regard itself as under a commission like that of Jesus: "Go ye into all the world and preach your Gospel to every creature." If Unitarianism is to be a missionary religion, it must fall into line with Jesus and Paul and those who carried Christianity over the Roman Empire in the early centuries, and those who are carrying it over the earth in these later centuries. It must feel: I too have a Gospel and woe is me if I do not preach it.

AGENCIES.

As to *agencies* to be employed in missionary work, there are four kinds—those that center in the *denomination*, those that center in the *church*, those that center in the *individual minister*, and those that center in the *individual private worker*.

THE DENOMINATION.

As to *denominational* agencies, I need say in this connection only a word; and that is, that such agencies are of course of great importance, and should be sustained, but that they can be sustained only as the churches and the persons that make up the denomination feel interested in them and sustain them. Every church, every minister, every layman should feel responsible for denominational matters. In so far as they do, the denomination will be strong; in so far as they do not, it will be weak. No denomination has any charmed life—able to continue without visible sustenance; it has no life at all except as it draws it through roots thrust down into the warm hearts and clear brains and generous purses of individual men and women.

PRIVATE WORKERS.

As to missionary work to be done by *private individuals*, apart from denominational or church organizations—this also I need not speak of more than in a word. Of course there is no one, however he is situated, who cannot, if he desires, do missionary work of some kind. Every one can invite friends to go with him to church; every one can scatter tracts, or printed sermons, or lend papers containing important religious articles

among friends and neighbors; every one can send away papers or tracts by mail to friends at a distance; most persons can own a few good books—two or three or half a dozen—the very best, and yet not expensive, such as Channing's Life, and Parker's "Discourse of Religion," and Collyer's "Simple Truth," and quietly slip them from time to time into the hands of persons who may be willing to read them. All this is missionary work of the very best kind. It requires not much time, or means, or any high order of talent to do it; one need not even be associated with others of like belief with himself; as an isolated Liberal he can do all this, and perhaps can even do it most usefully for being isolated. Most that is required, to do this kind of missionary work is, to really love the new faith, feel its preciousness, and earnestly desire to give it to others.

A MISSIONARY MINISTRY.

As to kinds of missionary work that can be done by *Ministers* I shall need to speak more at length.

Under this head, the thing I wish to say at the beginning, and perhaps the most important single thing of all that I can say, is, that the Liberal ministry should everywhere, as it seems to me, regard itself, and be regarded by the churches, as distinctly a *missionary* ministry,—that is to say, not a ministry simply to Unitarians—to the churches already organized, but also and beyond these to the public, to the communities in which the churches are located, to the intelligence of the time, to the unchurched class, to the members of orthodox churches who have outgrown their old beliefs and are violating their consciences by remaining in those churches, yet who know not where else to go, to men and women of all classes who ought to be Unitarians and would be if only our Gospel were carried with warmth, clearness and power to them. I mean, no man, unless under extraordinary circumstances, should be engaged as a pastor with the understanding that he is to give his whole time and strength to his own people. Rather, the understanding should be that, after giving a reasonable amount of service to his home church, he should be permitted and expected, and with the hearty co-operation and support of his church in it, to undertake in one way and another to push out into new fields, to sow seed in fresh soil, to reach new minds,—in a word, to evangelize, so far as possible, the community in which he locates, and, if practicable, adjoining communities also. I say, I think this should be the general understanding in regard to our ministers.

OURS A PIONEER MOVEMENT.

Our situation as Unitarians is peculiar. It is of the highest importance that both our churches and our ministers should feel how peculiar it is. We are not in the condition of the other denominations about us—with everything gained. With us everything is yet to be won. We are pioneers. We are just beginning our career. In New England we have been in existence longest, and in that small section we have some strength.

But throughout the Middle States, the great South, and the greater West, we have hardly yet gained a foothold at all, except in a few of the larger towns and cities. A majority of the people have never even seen a Unitarian church edifice or preacher, or read a Unitarian book or tract. This shows what a work we have before us, if we are going to evangelize this country with our gospel.

NON-RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM.

But, you say, there is a great deal of so-called liberalism scattered throughout the land; is not this essentially Unitarian? I answer, a small element of it is Unitarian, but most of it is not: most of it, alas! is mere religious negativism, mere opposition to orthodoxy;

while some of it goes so far as violently to oppose all religion, at least all religion that cares for organization or worship. As Unitarians we have an important mission to this non-orthodox class. No other gospel but ours will reach the men and women who constitute it. Our gospel of progressive, rational Christianity, carried to them, will reach many, and save them to religion.

ORTHODOXY DOMINANT.

Still, the great majority of the people of this country are not disbelievers in religion, or even disbelievers in orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, either in its Protestant or its Catholic form, everywhere has the field. We sometimes hear it said that orthodoxy is declining. I am convinced there never was a greater mistake: it was never so strong as it is to-day. And what is more, until a better form of religion appears it never will decline; and it never should. As between orthodoxy and no religion at all, the great majority of men will always choose orthodoxy; for, notwithstanding its irrational and morally bad theological doctrines, it does much to feed the religious life of man. There is just one thing that can destroy orthodoxy: something better. Has God committed to us as Liberal Christians something better? Then here is our mission. Not to destroy the orthodox *churches* and *denominations* around us, but only their unworthy *theology:* to destroy that by showing to those who hold it something more reasonable, more true, more practically helpful, more noble.

IS ORTHODOXY BECOMING LIBERAL?

We hear much about the orthodox denominations already becoming liberal. As to one or two bodies, there is probably some little truth in the claim; but beyond that it seems more than doubtful. Wesley seems to have been quite as liberal as Methodism is to-day. Luther seems to have been more liberal than Lutheranism is to-day. One is startled in reading such a work as Lecky's History of England in the Eighteenth Century, to find how far advanced, theologically, was more than one of the leading religious bodies at the beginning of that century, and to mark in one's own mind what seems actually to be retrogression in important respects since. Coming to our own land, one is hardly less startled to find how large a proportion of the leading men of our Revolution held liberal religious views; it is exceedingly doubtful if as large a proportion of our leading men to-day are equally liberal. As to churches, there are probably very few, if any, of any orthodox denomination that would be willing to take their stand now upon so broad a platform as that which the first church of the pilgrims, at Plymouth, maintained, or as that adopted by the original Salem church—the first church organized in this country.* And no *denomination*, except Unitarian or Universalist, would think of adopting a platform so liberal as those which those two earliest churches of Puritan New England stood upon.

It is true, the orthodox bodies generally have dropped out of sight or tacitly laid aside a few of the more palpably unreasonable and shocking *features* of their theological system, like the damnation of infants and the literalness of hell fire. But this is a small matter. It does not destroy or make over a great old building, to cut off here and there an ugly gargoyle. The theological system, *as a system*, remains essentially unchanged. Nor were its central doctrines ever more insisted upon in all the orthodox bodies (with the exception of a fragment of the Congregationalist) than now.

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* The Plymouth church was organized on the other side of the sea. The Plymouth and Salem churches are both Unitarian now; but both retain the covenants adopted by the founders of the churches, these covenants being broad and liberal enough (strange as it may seem) for almost any Unitarian or Universalist church of to-day.

If some doctrines are taught now in a less extreme form than they were in the days of Luther and Calvin, others are taught in a form more extreme, as, for example, the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible.

SUPERFICIAL JUDGMENTS.

It is said that men see what they look for in this world. Thus we, desiring earnestly that the old denominations shall become liberal, are all the while on the lookout for signs of liberalism; and so we see all the signs there are, and some, it is to be feared, that exist only in our own imaginations. The truth of the case seems to be that there are in most churches *individual persons* who are more or less liberal. These persons, because we ourselves are liberal, we are likely to come into contact with. Moreover, such persons, because of their anomalous position, are the ones that are likely to be most noticed and commented upon publicly. If they are ministers they are the ones whose unorthodox utterances get into the papers; they are the ones who are tried for heresy, and thus have all eyes called to them. Now, because of these persons, we are likely to say, with quick-kindling enthusiasm, "How liberal the old denominations are growing"! But in thus doing we judge most superficially. I do not believe it can be said with truth, that either the Roman Catholic or the leading orthodox Protestant denominations of this country, *as denominations* (with the possible single exception already mentioned), have grown or are growing liberal more than in a very slight degree. There are liberal *persons in* them, as I have said, and in considerable numbers, taking the country as a whole; yet probably not a quarter part as many as some of us are optimistically disposed to think. Everything seems to show that the denominations, as denominations, not only stand for, so far as creeds are concerned, but sing, and pray, and everywhere. save in a few exceptional pulpits, preach, and teach to the children in their Sunday schools, and believe, essentially what they have always taught, and sung, and prayed, and preached, and believed. And shall we not say that this will continue,—that they will go on doing the same, until Liberal Christianity, by building up into strength by their side a more reasonable and a nobler faith, shall compel them to throw off their doctrines of the night, and advance? Indeed, so far does orthodoxy, as a whole, seem to be from showing much sign of advance, that there are not wanting very thoughtful and intelligent persons who believe that what change there has been during the past ten or fifteen years, since on the Catholic side the holding of the Vatican Council of 1870, which declared the infallibility of the Pope, and since on the Protestant side Mr. Moody and the Young Men's Christian Associations of the country came on the stage, has actually been a backward one—a change in Catholicism in the direction of greater hostility to our public schools, a more severe exercise of ecclesiastical authority over congregations and over home life, and a more vigorous propagandism; and a change in Protestantism in the direction of a more fervid Jesus-worship, a more unblushing acceptance of the doctrine of "salvation by the blood," and a more narrow and uncompromising Evangelicalism — this, taking the country as a whole, rather than any general advance toward breadth, liberality or reason in religion.

THE WORK OF UNITARIANISM NOT DONE.

And yet, in the face of all these facts, can you believe me? there are not a few people, and people in sympathy with Unitarian doctrines, and members of Unitarian churches, and even in some cases Unitarian ministers, who dream—optimistically and pleasantly—that Unitarianism has not much more to do—its mission is about accomplished — the

Christian world is getting so liberal that Unitarianism need not be aggressive any more, but may well content itself from this time on with taking care of the churches it already has, and making them as practically useful as it can without attempting to push out beyond its present limits.

With orthodoxy, on the one hand, powerful and agressive, and aggressive with and for its same old doctrines, which belie historic facts, shock reason, offend against justice, darken the character of God, and shadow death and all the world beyond with an infinite horror; and with indifference to religion and violent anti-religion on the other hand, prophesying that all religion is to pass away and be buried with the superstitions of the past, and doing what they can to make their prophesy come true—can it be possible that any thinking man can believe that there is no need for Unitarianism — that even if it has been useful in the past it may now regard its mission as pretty well completed? What can men be thinking of? The work of Liberal Christianity done! As well go to a place where a great building is to be erected, and as soon as you see a pile of brick and lumber on the ground, and the corner-stone laid, declare that the work there is done. As well affirm that the work of a splendid new ocean steamer is done as soon as she has been launched and made a trial trip about the harbor! As well assert that nature's great work of spring, summer and autumn is done when the first April grass begins to green the hill-sides!

AT THE BEGINNING, NOT AT THE END OF A CAREER.

No! the work of Unitarianism is not done. It has scarcely begun. Our cause is in its early spring, not in its late fall. Instead of the time having arrived to lay aside aggressiveness, the time has come for us to begin such an aggressive campaign as we have never known. Instead of its being evening with us, it is morning.

Now, this our churches should understand and feel. And especially our ministers should understand and feel this. Unless we have faith in our future, but especially unless our ministers have faith in our future, there is no future for us. In every religious movement the ministers are the natural leaders. This must be so in the nature of the case. Hence, I said, I think the Liberal ministry should everywhere regard itself, and be regarded by the churches, as distinctively a missionary ministry. Every Unitarian minister should feel: "Woe is me, if I preach not my glad and precious gospel, not only to my own church, but to others—to as many outside as I can reach by tongue or by pen." The ministers of other denominations may be excusable, perhaps, for regarding their duty as done when they have been faithful to their own congregations. Not so with our ministers. Our cause is too new. The need for our gospel is too urgent. Our laborers are too few. Our enemies are too many. The land before us is too great that invites us to enter in and possess it. No Unitarian minister should regard his duty as done who has not added to his work of a pastor the work of a missionary. It must come to this. In no other way can our cause be carried forward as it ought to be. Nor need this be too severe a task for the minister. The new work the outpushing work, the work to reach fresh minds will be the most enjoyable, inspiring, refreshing work he does.

MINISTER SUNDAY MORNING! MISSIONARY SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING!

It is the common, routine work of the pulpit that wearies—the preaching right on, year after year, to the same hearers. Let this be limited to one service each Sunday, in the morning, and then let the afternoon and evening, one or both, as the minister has strength, be

devoted, with the earnest co-operation of his church, to the work of sowing his gospel in fresh fields; and the result will be, the minister's health will be more vigorous, his morning preaching to his own people will improve in life and earnestness, his church will grow faster than ever, and the cause of Unitarianism will spread and prosper as never before.

If we could get this new departure made, in regard to the duties required of our ministers generally, their own aim in their ministry, and the understandings entered into between themselves and their parishes when they settle, I believe it would create an era in Unitarian missionary work, and therefore in Unitarian growth and progress in this country.

DOCTRINAL PREACHING.

One more thought before I leave the minister's part in missionary work.

No minister can do his duty as a missionary of his faith who does not carefully indoctrinate his own people: I mean, thoroughly instruct them in the doctrines and principles of Unitarianism. But, you ask, what does this have to do with missionary work? I answer, the indoctrinization of a church has a missionary influence in at least two ways. First, we should not forget that change is constantly going on in every religious society. New members come in. Persons who have been in go out. Families remove to other localities. Young men go abroad to seek their fortunes. Young women marry and go away to make for themselves new homes. Now, it is important that these persons going out from our Unitarian societies thus, go to stand for our faith, to be missionaries of our gospel in the new localities to which they migrate. How can we make sure that they will thus do, and not drop away, as is so common, into non-church-going, or into some orthodox church which may happen to be near, or socially attractive? The only way to secure this result which is so desirable, is, to make them Unitarians from principle, from intelligent conviction, while they are with us in our churches. Our ministers, as the religious teachers of their people, must do that which some of them seem to have such a curious aversion to—preach doctrinal sermons, series of doctrinal sermons, setting forth our distinctive principles in an orderly and careful way, illustrating these principles so as to make them clear to all minds, comparing and contrasting them with the views of other religious bodies, giving much attention, too, to the history of Liberal Christianity, showing what this advanced thought which we represent has cost of sacrifice, suffering, heroism, martyrdom, in the long past, and tracing the slow and careful and painful steps of advance by which the old religious views have been left behind and the positions which we stand for to-day have been reached. Nor is it enough to do this kind of work in the pulpit. It should also be done systematically and earnestly in the Bible class, the pastor's class, the Wednesday evening lecture, and the Sunday school. We should see to it that no child grows up in any of our families, or under our influence, without being made intelligent in these matters. Thus our churches and congregations and young people will come to be Unitarian, not from mere chance or from surface reasons of any kind, but from intelligent conviction. Thus, when any among them marry, they will not put off their Unitarianism at the same time that they put on the bridal ring or take their wedding vows. And when any of them remove to other communities, they will not go to forget that they have ever been of our household of faith, and to drift aimlessly whithersoever the religious or non-religious or even anti-religious current next to them may happen to set; but they will go to remember what they have learned,

to carry with them their convictions, to join Unitarian churches if such are at hand, and if not, then to be solitary witnesses and missionaries of our truth in the communities where they locate.

This, then, is the first missionary reason why our ministers should indoctrinate their people.

The second is not less important. It is, that only thus—only as we preach doctrine, only as we make our churches and congregations thoroughly intelligent as to what Unitarianism means and what it does not mean, how it has come into existence and what it has cost, how it compares and contrasts with other faiths about us, and in what its superiority lies, can we kindle in our people a deep and abiding missionary spirit, so that they shall be willing and glad to give liberally for denominational purposes, and so that they shall become hearty co-laborers with their pastors in missionary work in their own communities.

HOW MISSIONARIES AND MARTYRS ARE MADE.

Nobody in this world ever becomes zealous, persistent and self-sacrificing in the promulgation of nothing, or of something but he knows not what, or of a mere vague, undefined sentiment. The things which move the world are ideas. For truths, doctrines, principles, men will die. If you want to make a man a hero, give him a great truth burning in his soul. If you want to make him a martyr, give him a great doctrine or principle which seems to him of God. If you want to make him a missionary, give him a great belief, a mighty conviction, which possesses and masters him. That is the way martyrs and missionaries have always been made in the past. That is the way missionaries are to be made still, and among Unitarians, if we are ever to have them at all. Teach our doctrines, preach our principles with emphasis, with iteration, with a mighty sense of their truth and value; get them clear in men's heads and burning in their hearts (and this can only be done by preaching them), and we shall then have no lack of missionaries at home or abroad.

THE CHURCH.

I pass now to a consideration of the *church* as an agency for missionary work.

Of course in speaking of the ministry and the church under separate heads I do not mean to imply that their work can be carried on separately. Each is necessary to the other. Their work to be successful must be in the fullest degree mutual and co-operative. Yet there is a large and important class of missionary activities that may very properly be spoken of as belonging to the church. And even if in many of these it is necessary for the minister to have part, still it is well to think of them as something for which the church is particularly responsible.

I have urged that our Unitarian ministry should everywhere regard itself, and be regarded by our parishes, as a missionary ministry. I now want to urge with equal emphasis that every Unitarian *church* should regard *itself* as a *missionary church*, and shape its organizations, plans and methods accordingly. Most of our churches are radically defective here, and I believe the defect to be most serious. They are organized simply for the accomodation of their own church life,—for their own narrow, selfish ends. This is wrong. Every church should organize itself, and shape its activities all the while, not only with reference to itself,—its own edification and growth,—but also with reference to the dissemination of its truth outside of itself.

The reasons why are plain. Only thus can our churches themselves be made to prosper and grow as they ought,—for nothing brings such blessing to church or man as the attempt to bless others;

and only thus can each society discharge its obligation to the common cause.

But what should our churches do to organize themselves for successful propagandist work? I answer, I think *four things.*

CHURCH AND DENOMINATION.

First—Each church should put itself into close and living connection with the general body—the denomination—by sending delegates to its conferences or other general gatherings; by requiring those delegates on their return to make reports of the most important things done and said at those conferences or general meetings; by seeing that the church and congregation are supplied from time to time with such printed reports as may be obtainable of the general work and wants of the denomination; and by contributing regularly every year a greater or less sum, as the church may be able, but something, to the denominational treasury for the support of the various enterprises that are being carried on by the body at large.

CHURCH AND MINISTER.

Secondly—Every church should do what I have intimated under a preceding head, make a distinct arrangement with its minister to curtail the amount of preaching and other service demanded of him, so as to allow him time to preach once on each Sunday outside of his own pulpit, in a hall, or theatre, or school-house, or at a neighboring town—somewhere, to sow the seed of Unitarianism in fresh soil; and also so as to allow him time to engage, more or less, in other forms of missionary work which may seem to him important, such, for example, as disseminating Unitarian thought through the public journals.

STUDENTS FOR THE MINISTRY.

Thirdly—Every church should be constantly on the look-out for young men (and women) of talent and consecration, to study for the ministry. There is no calling to-day that ought to be regarded as so attractive to persons of noble aims in life, and fitted for it, as the ministry of our free, untrammeled Unitarian churches. Why, then, do not more of our ablest young men choose this calling? I think the fault is largely with the churches. The orthodox bodies are ever on the alert to discover young talent and turn it early into the high channels of religious service. It ought to be so with us. When Sir Humphrey Davy was praised for the important scientific discoveries he had made, he replied: "My most important discovery was Michael Faraday." Think of a church being able to discover among its young people, and lead to the high work of the Liberal ministry, a Channing, or a Parker, or a Bellows, or a Starr King, or a Mary Livermore. If Unitarianism is to go forward to a great future, it must have able preachers and teachers. But how is it to get these if our societies sit still and see their best and ablest young men go into law, and medicine, and journalism and business, and make no effort to attract them to the pulpit? I hardly know of anything that could give Unitarianism more of a forward impulse, or be more full of promise for its future, than a general stirring in our churches to find out what young talent we have among us that ought to be trained for, and consecrated to, the work of proclaiming our gospel to the world.

CHURCH MISSIONARY MEETINGS.

Fourthly—Every church should come together at least two or three times a year for the express purpose of considering missionary matters—listening to addresses and suggestions from the pastor and others, hearing reports as to what has been done, inquiring what ought to be done and how, and appointing responsible committees to take charge of such missionary activities as may be agreed upon.

Once a year, at least, each pastor should preach upon the missionary duties and opportunities of his church. This may be done to advantage upon a day known regularly as "Missionary Sunday," occurring perhaps in October or early November, as soon as practicable after the members of the congregations who may have been away for summer outings are back in their regular places at home and church. By preaching thus on Sunday morning the pastor is able to get the subject before all his people, which is very important; and then if the sermon can be followed immediately, either on Sunday evening, or on an evening of the same week, by one of the meetings which I have just suggested, for general missionary consultation and planning of missionary measures, the campaign for the winter can be laid out and entered upon early, and with the largest possible number of persons interested to engage actively in it and carry it forward.

LAYING OUT WORK.

The success of the missionary work of a church will depend principally upon two things. The first is, *the clearness of view with which it is undertaken.* Nothing is more discouraging than to set out to do missionary work without having a definite idea of what is to be done. You can find a dozen persons who will be willing to do, and will do well, a specific thing, as take charge of advertising Unitarian literature in a certain way in a certain paper, or carry to a certain hotel every Sunday morning, a package of tracts, or of cards of invitation to your church service where you cannot find one who will undertake missionary work in general, or who will succeed in accomplishing anything if he does. The worst enemy to missionary success is vagueness. This enemy you will need to attack first. If you can get the subject of missionary work, as it presents itself practically to you as a church, thoroughly investigated, the possibilities that open before you clearly understood, the difficulties you are likely to encounter apprehended, and the things you will undertake to do clearly and definitely outlined, you will have gone far toward accomplishing important results.

MISSIONARY COMMITTEES.

The second thing upon which success in church missionary work will be found to depend is *the placing of it in the hands of efficient committees* — committees who shall be held *responsible* for it, and who shall be expected to *report* to the church, at the missionary meetings which I have named, the work which they have done. It is a wise saying, "What is everybody's business is nobody's;" and nowhere is the saying more true than in church missionary work. You must not only get your work definitely determined and outlined, but you must get it "placed," and definite parties made responsible for it; and the only practicable way to effect this seems to be, as human nature goes, to have it understood from the beginning that they will be expected from time to time, regularly, to give account of their stewardship.

KINDS OF WORK.

I come now to specifications as to *lines* of missionary activity, or *definite things to be done.*

The kinds of missionary work which churches may engage in divide themselves roughly into *three.* First, that kind which looks simply to the *making of the church itself better known in the community*, with a view to causing it to be more widely useful and influential; secondly, work done by the pastor and other workers *to carry their gospel into new localities and to new classes*, unreached by the ordinary instrumentalities and methods of the church; and, thirdly, the general dissemination of Unitarian thought, in the home com-

munity and abroad, *by means of the printed page.* Let me speak of each of these three kinds of missionary work separately.

LETTING THE COMMUNITY KNOW!

First, I mention that which looks simply *to making the church itself better known in the community* — to calling public attention to it and its principles and aims. We cannot reach people, or attract them to us, until they are aware that we exist. We cannot convert people to our gospel until we can manage in some way to let them know that we have a gospel, and what it is. Hence, if a church is wise, it will thoroughly advertise its services and let the public understand what it is doing. I know there is prejudice in some minds against the thought of advertising in connection with religious matters. But there should not be. If a thing is good, and we want people to know about it, there should be no objection to taking straightforward, sensible ways of letting them know. Many active Evangelical and even Episcopal churches advertise freely. Why should not we? Mr. Moody has always advertised most extensively, in all his work; and from this has come no inconsiderable part of his success. Why should we not learn from him a lesson of business wisdom, even if we reject his revivalistic theology? Of course, a church should sternly avoid sensational or clap-trap methods of putting itself before the people. But at the same time it should be alive, and alive in letting men know that it exists, and has truths for them to hear, and good for them to receive.

WAYS.

How may a church advertise to advantage? For one thing, it should see that announcements of its Sunday services are always found in the Saturday evening and Sunday morning papers. This is of much more importance for our churches than for churches of the older and better known denominations.

In some places a bulletin board may, with good effect, be set up outside the church door, on which notices of all services and gatherings may be kept posted through the week, for the information of the public.

Large cards, announcing the church and its services, may, with advantage, be placed in hotels, railway and street-car stations and other public rooms.

Every member of the congregation should be kept liberally supplied (for distribution among friends) with small printed cards or neat pocket folders, giving location of church, times of services, a brief statement of what the church stands for, and an invitation to the recipient to attend its meetings. Such cards or circulars may, with excellent results, be given out upon the streets from time to time, and at least once a year they should be distributed throughout the community generally, one being placed in every dwelling, office and store of the town in which the church is located, if the town does not contain more than ten or fifteen thousand inhabitants, or if it is larger, then at every house, office and store of the *section* of the city in which the church stands. Some of the best results of advertising that I have ever known at all, I have known to come from such general distributions of church announcements, accompanied with a brief statement of what Unitarianism is, or the religious platform of the church sending out the cards. From both observation and experience I am convinced that there is hardly a Unitarian church to be found that would not reap advantage from such a plan of calling the attention of the community, annually, to its existence and its principles, and extending a general invitation to everybody to attend its services.

The duty of attending to this line of things should usually be entrusted to

a committee of vigorous but discreet young men, or business men, acting under the advice of the pastor. If they do their work well I am sure the church and the general cause will both be gainers from their labor.

I know, in one sense, it may seem that such work should not be called *missionary*, because it keeps the home church in view. However, in another and a deeper sense, I think it is missionary; at least it is advance work, and it is thoroughly missionary in spirit. It is what may be called missionary work beginning at home. And that is exactly the place where missionary work should begin. Our first responsibility is to make our gospel known to the multitudes who know nothing about it at our own doors. Having done this, there is consistency in making efforts to carry it to more distant places. If it is worth while to spend $10,000, or $20,000, or $50,000 to build a church, and $2,000 or $5,000 a year to carry it on, is it not worth while to spend $50 or $100 more a year to let the public know that there is such a church, and what it is trying to do?

I now come to the *second* kind of missionary work open to our churches.

This is a kind the missionary character of which nobody will doubt. It is work which aims, not at bringing the church which engages in it more conspicuously before the community, and thus increasing its influence and usefulness, but at going entirely outside existing churches, and carrying our Unitarian gospel *to new classes of minds* and *to new localities.*

ADVANCE WORK AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LAITY FOR THE SAME.

I have already partly anticipated what is to be said under this head, in urging that churches should not require of their minister a second sermon on Sunday, but should allow and expect him to preach in the afternoon or evening outside of his own pulpit—perhaps in a neighboring town, or perhaps in some hall, or theatre, or club-room, or school-house, or parlor in some part of his own town, where he can reach a fresh set of minds. But to this I wish now to add, that such outside labor should not be left exclusively to the minister, or be thought of as something which he alone has responsibility for. Unitarianism is surely as much the layman's gospel as it is the minister's. Why, then, should not the layman feel that he is under as much obligation as the minister is to do what lies within his power to spread it? Doubtless there are certain kinds of outside work which the minister may do to advantage alone. But, as a rule, he will find himself needing the co-operation of his church in his missionary endeavors almost as much as in his home work. The minister and church should plan together the outside work that is to be undertaken, and where it is entered upon it should be thoroughly a joint labor. If it is desired to open preaching services in a new location near at hand, the preliminary work, such as finding a proper place of meeting, renting the same, providing means to meet the expenses, advertising, visiting and scattering Unitarian literature through the neighborhood, and so on, should be done largely by laymen and laywomen of the church. The financial burden should not fall upon the minister; neither should the musical. As a rule, the choir of his church should be placed at his disposal to furnish music for the new movement. And as for the finances, the movement, if begun wisely and managed in a businesslike manner, should pretty nearly pay its own way.

OCCASIONAL COURSES OF THEATRE LECTURES.

It is a question worth considering whether occasional brief courses of winter evening theatre services could not be held to advantage in many of our towns and cities, even where we already have societies. There are vast numbers of

people that are hardly, if at all, reached by existing churches. They are very generally indifferent to churches, even if they do not positively shun them. Such persons must not be neglected or given up. If they will not seek us, we must seek them. The very opening of a theatre or opera house for religious services challenges the attention of this class, while it also calls the thought of the public generally in a very marked way to us and what we stand for. Suppose, then, in many of our larger towns and cities movements of this kind be undertaken each winter. Let the minister and the church, in any given place, after looking the ground over carefully, engage a reputable and attractive theatre or opera house for a series of from four to eight services; these services, of course, not to interfere with the regular morning services of the church, which should go steadily on. Let these theatre meetings be thoroughly advertised; let the choir of the church, or a special choir organized for the occasion, furnish music; and let the minister preach the strongest sermons he can,—not controversial in spirit, yet in the best sense doctrinal—that is, calculated to set Unitarian thought in the most effective way possible before the public. Moreover, let tracts and missionary literature be distributed freely to those who come to hear, and let the sermons preached be reported as fully as practicable in the papers. What would be the result of such a series of services? Could it be other than good? Would it not be, for one thing, to give new life to the church? And then, would not such meetings create a new interest in Unitarianism throughout the town or city, and a new sense among the people generally, that it is worth their attention, and that it is present with them to stay, and to grow, and to be a power in the community?

I am aware that the expense of such an undertaking would be considerable; and few churches would be likely to feel, at first thought, that they could afford it. And yet, it should not be forgotten that very considerable collections can be taken up at such meetings, with no detriment to the meetings, but if anything a positive gain to them; and furthermore, that subscriptions can be secured for carrying on extraordinary enterprises of this kind from a class of persons in the community who are not regular payers to our societies. It is doubtful, therefore, whether it is not possible in many a place, even where our cause is not strong, to carry out such an undertaking, under the management of a good financial committee, without bringing much, if any, additional burden upon the church. In large cities, where there are several Unitarian societies, it would doubtless be best for all to join in any movement of this kind that might be undertaken — thus giving it greater strength, and reducing the burden that it might bring upon any.

Of course, nobody would desire to substitute these theatre services in place of the regular, straight-forward work of the church. But it is a question worth considering whether the regular church work in many a place may not frequently be supplemented by something of this kind, with the result of strengthening the local society (or societies), and also sowing a great deal of good seed in the community and beyond. Have we not more than one church, half dead and half alive, hardly able to drag along from one year to another, that would be thrilled through and through, and quickened into a new life, by carrying out, for one or more winters, such a project? The getting out of the beaten rut of selfish indolence, and beginning to think about others, and to do something to give its gospel to others, would greatly bless the society itself, as well as the community.

But in saying so much about missionary preaching in theatres, and halls, and outside places, wherever a company of fresh minds can be reached, let me not be understood as wishing to convey the idea that preaching is the only kind of missionary work that minister and people can undertake to carry on. Preaching is important, but we are apt to put too exclusive stress upon it. Only a few can be preachers; at least preachers in the sense of being ordained and set apart exclusively for the work; but many can be teachers, lay-preachers, disseminaters of our truth, awakeners of thought, workers in various other important ways.

What other ways are there? I will mention, in this connection, only two—the *Sunday school* and the *social religious meeting.*

MISSIONARY SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK.

As to the Sunday school, this should be made not only a means of religious education for our own children, but a means of broadcasting the seed of our beautiful gospel in many other young minds. I fear that, as a rule, we are less active in home Sunday school work than are our orthodox neighbors. Are we not still further behind in mission Sunday school work? But surely this ought not so to be. Here and there one of our churches is carrying on a mission Sunday school in some neglected or outlying neighborhood. Might not many another church find opportunity to do the same if it were alive and earnest? A mission school need not be large to be valuable. Some of the most serviceable I have ever known have not contained more than twenty-five or fifty scholars. How few of our churches are there where three or four earnest workers, setting out together, could not find some neighborhood in which to collect a score or two of children (or better still, if children and parents) for religious instruction every Sunday afternoon! We ought to be everywhere on the lookout for opportunities to do this kind of work.

MISSIONARY MEETINGS CONDUCTED BY OTHERS THAN MINISTERS.

Much should be said of the social religious meeting as a missionary instrumentality. By social religious meeting I mean any religious meeting conducted without formal preaching by a minister. It may be a meeting for religious inquiry, or conversation, or select readings on religious subjects, or the hearing and discussion of a religious paper, or the reading of a printed sermon. Religious clubs would come under this head. There is a great opportunity for such meetings. There is hardly a Liberal woman of intelligence and earnestness anywhere but could easily find a dozen or two dozen others who would be glad to meet with her once a week, or once in two weeks, for two hours, to study and talk about Channing, or Parker, or Emerson, or the history of religion in New England, or Unitarianism, its doctrines and history, or the history of religious progress in the world. And there is hardly a place to be found where a Unitarian man of education and religious spirit could not easily organize a club or company of both men and women, to devote an evening a week, or an evening a fortnight, to the same kind of study and inquiry. Such clubs, or companies, or social religious meetings, should bring together, not simply Unitarians, but any and all who desire candidly to find out the truth. They should, of course, be conducted in the spirit of the greatest sincerity and charitableness. Thus carried on, hardly any missionary instrumentality is of more value. And the particularly interesting thing about missionary work of this kind is, that it can be done anywhere, in places where there are not Unitarian churches, as well as in places where there are.

SUNDAY READING CIRCLES.

It would be entirely within bounds for me to say that there are to-day in this country hundreds, probably thousands, of communities unblessed with Unitarian or Universalist societies, where there are a few Liberals, only to a limited extent known to each other, either attending orthodox churches under constant mental protest, or else not going to church at all, who would be benefited more than we can tell by a little simple club or social religious organization, to gather them together for an hour or two every Sunday, to read and study and talk about Unitarian literature and thought, and to get acquainted socially and religiously with one another. The only question is, how to get such little clubs or circles organized and in operation.

Our state missionaries can do the work to some extent. Most of our ministers know of communities where, with a little exertion, *they* could be instrumental in forming such organizations. The same is true of many of our church members —men and women. Members leaving our churches and removing to new communities, should bear this kind of work in mind, and undertake it if practicable. Our young men and young women trained in our Sunday schools and Bible classes, should have such service put before them, and pressed upon their attention, as something for them to do when they go out into the world. Oh, we want more lay workers. We want individual Unitarians everywhere, within our churches and outside of churches, who shall become missionaries of our faith in these ways. These little clubs and social religious circles would, in scores and hundreds of cases, sooner or later develop into churches. But whether they did or not, the good they would do, and the help they would lend to the cause of Unitarianism, would be of immense value.

No! Much as we need more ministers, our need of earnest and devoted lay workers is, if possible, greater still. And why should we not have them? No churches contain more intelligence than ours. None contain persons of higher moral aims, or more desirous to do good. None have truth to present to men that is more practical or more interesting to the lay mind. Why, then, do we not have as many earnest lay workers among us, as, for example, the Methodists do? Proportionally to our numbers we ought to have more than any other religious body; and I believe we may have, if only our ministers and churches will set about finding them out, training them and setting them to work. But we shall never have many workers until we plan much work. The more work we undertake to do, the more workers we shall be able to raise up.

THE PRINTING PRESS AS A MISSIONARY AGENT.

I come now to the third and last kind of missionary work that I wish to mention, viz.: that which churches may do by means of the *printed page*. Here a vast and most important field opens before us—one that most of our churches have cultivated to some extent already, yet very little compared with the need and the opportunity. Every kind of reform in our day is using the press more and more as a means of getting its claims before the people. We should be able to do this with peculiar advantage, because the class of persons to whom we naturally appeal, as most interested in our thought, is the reading and thinking class. What means, then, may our liberal churches employ to disseminate our views through paper and type?

Of course, printed matter is most effective, other things being equal, when it is fresh, and comes to the reader first hand, and from some writer whom he knows and is interested in. Churches should bear this in mind, and hence

should plan each year, if possible, themselves to do some printing, as well as to distribute the printed thought of others. What can they do?

First, they can occasionally publish a sermon of their pastor, in pamphlet form. This will cost something; though divided among a congregation the cost becomes a small matter, and the effect will be excellent. The pastor will preach better for it; the community will have a higher regard for him from knowing that his discourses are from time to time published; and his word in this winged form will fly into many a nook and cranny in the community, and far beyond, where his spoken utterances never penetrate.

Less expensive, and perhaps quite as effective, is the reporting of sermons in newspapers. We might have a great deal more of this done than now, if our chuches would pay a little attention to the matter. Of course, a minister of refinement of feeling is unwilling to take the initiative to get his sermon reported. But it will generally be found to be the case that a committee of influential and judicious persons appointed by the church to have the matter in charge, can easily, as from time to time the minister preaches discourses of special interest to the public, arrange to have them printed, entire or in abstract, in one or more of the papers of the place, thus multiplying many fold the preacher's congregation.

But printing should not be limited to sermons from the pastor. Anything expressive of rational religious views that can be put before the people will do good.

It is a service to the cause to call public attention to a good Liberal book.

From time to time, statements of one kind or another, conveying a false impression about Unitarianism, get into the papers. It is a not unimportant part of a church's missionary activity to see that these are corrected.

It is of a great deal of value for a church to give to the public a carefully prepared brief statement of *the principles* it stands for. Such a brief printed statement answers a thousand questions, corrects a thousand misapprehensions. A few of our churches are beginning to print, every autumn or winter, a little *Church Annual*—a neat pamphlet of twenty, or thirty, or forty pages, full of information about the church,—what it is, and what it has done the past year, its religious platform or covenant, basis of membership, officers, perhaps roll of members, sub-organizations (as Ladies' Association, Sunday School, Unity Club), charities, special services held, series of sermons preached by the pastor, members of the congregation who have died during the year, new books placed in the church library, reports of committees, special enterprises proposed for the coming year, etc., etc. Such a little *Annual*, besides being of great interest and value to the church itself in many ways, is one of the very best missionary pamphlets that the members can have. It enables them to show to others at a glance what a Unitarian church is, stands for, is trying to do.

DISTRIBUTING MISSIONARY LITERATURE AT THE CHURCH DOOR.

So much, then, for printing. Another kind of missionary work not less important, is distributing missionary matter which we are able to get already printed. Perhaps the best single place to distribute this is at the church door. If we can send a casual attendant upon our church service home with a tract or printed sermon of Freeman Clarke or Mr. Simmons, to read at his own fireside and pass around among the members of his family, we accomplish a double good by our church service. There are two *ways* of distributing tracts at the church door. One is to have close beside the

main entrance a table or a tract rack, and keep it filled constantly with an assortment of tracts, which all comers and goers are at liberty to take freely, according to their needs or tastes. The other is for the church to keep constantly on hand such an assortment of tracts, and to bring them out for public use, not all at once, but, one kind at a time. According to this plan, the Sunday a tract is placed upon the table or rack, (or, perhaps better, is given out to the congregation at the door as they go out from the church), the minister in the pulpit calls attention to the tract, — telling something as to what it is, and who wrote it,— thus creating an interest in it such as would not be felt if it were simply seen lying among others upon a table. In my own experience the better results have seemed generally to come from the second plan of distribution. However, the method is not so important as thoroughness and persistence in following up whatever plan one undertakes.

MISSIONARY USES OF LITERATURE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

Nor should we stop with church-door distribution. Members of the congregation should be requested to take tracts home, to scatter among neighbors, and to mail to friends at a distance; and such scholars of our Sunday schools as have parents who do not attend services should from time to time be given tracts or other inexpensive missionary literature to take to them.

Tracts and printed sermons may with excellent effect be distributed weekly — on Saturday afternoon, or Sunday morning,— in hotels, boarding-houses, barber-shops, and other public places. In one of our Western cities this has been done extensively, and with results the most encouraging, especially from the literature left in hotels.

Unitarian merchants and shop-keepers will often be found willing and glad to keep packages of liberal tracts on their counters for distribution among their customers.

Books and periodicals, as well as tracts and printed sermons, may be extensively used for missionary purposes, although naturally in a different manner. Almost any minister or missionary committee could easily name persons, or whole families, who are in such a religious condition that a good Unitarian paper sent to them for a year would be likely to bring them to the point of taking their stand distinctly as Unitarians. What, therefore, could be wiser than to use a few copies of papers each year in this way? And then, there are many families in all our communities who, with a little effort, could be induced to *subscribe* for one of our papers, who now do not take one. What a gain that would be! As a rule, the value of a person for Unitarian purposes—I mean, for interest in the cause and willingness to labor and sacrifice for it—is nearly or quite doubled as soon as he becomes a habitual reader of a paper representing our thought and work.

Books are too expensive to be given away to any large extent (although some of the most telling missionary work I have ever known has been done by the judicious giving away of books); but they can be made very useful as missionary agencies, nevertheless. In a home they are almost as useful as a paper. Church missionary committees can not do a wiser thing than to make an effort to get as many first-rate Unitarian books into homes as possible.

We ought to have many more church libraries and reading rooms than we have. A very inexpensive reading room, fitted up in one of the social rooms of the church, can often be made to reach half or two-thirds as many persons on Sunday afternoon as the minister has been able to reach in the morning. Church libraries are especially valuable.

They need not be large. A society may well start one even if for the first year it can purchase but twenty-five or fifty volumes. Only let it not make the mistake of selecting these twenty-five or fifty volumes out of the bookseller's lists of literary, scientific and miscellaneous works. Literary and scientific books may well be added after a while. But the library should exist distinctly for purposes of Liberal religion. Whether there is money to buy anything else or not, let it at least be supplied with the ablest, freshest, best books of our own thought and history, and of rational religious scholarship,—to help Sunday school teachers and Bible class teacher and scholars, to give our people a clearer understanding of our history and principles, and especially to loan to seekers after religious light in the community at large.

One thing more. With a little effort we may have such Liberal books as we think most important kept for sale at bookstores, where, if they are well advertised (which we must ourselves see to), they will be certain to find some sale. Several churches have also adopted the plan of keeping a few of the freshest and most important of our Unitarian books for sale on Sunday in the church vestibule. I have myself found both these plans to work well, having been able, in my work at Ann Arbor, to get sometimes as many as a hundred volumes a year sold as the result of the two.

Perhaps this is as much as need be said regarding methods of missionary propagandism by paper and type in our own communities. A few words, however should be added regarding the promulgation of our printed thought *beyond* our own communities.

THE POST-OFFICE MISSION.

Within two or three years past it has been demonstrated, first by Miss Sarah Ellis, of Cincinnati, Ohio, and then, following her lead, by other workers in different parts of the country, that the *mails* may be used much more effectively than we have supposed, in scattering our printed word. How? Briefly, as follows: Advertisements are inserted in local newspapers, saying that Unitarian literature will be furnished free, by mail, (tracts and pamphlets as gifts, and books as loans) to persons desiring to read it, on application to —— such an address. Responses to these advertisements come in; tracts, papers and books are sent out; correspondence is opened; first applications are followed by others; supply creates further demand; and thus the work develops. It is very simple; usually it begins very small. But followed up patiently and diligently, the results become important. Miss Ellis has created for herself a sort of parish-at-large; and is probably doing quite as much to disseminate Unitarian thought in the West as is being done by any one of our pulpits. In Iowa our brethren have taken up the work, under the name of the "Postoffice Mission," and adopted it as a State enterprise. A central committee has charge of the State as a whole, and the purpose is, as fast as possible, to organize local committees throughout the State, whose duty it shall be to work up each county or group of counties separately, until the entire State is covered. The scheme is a bold one, but enough has been accomplished already to show that it is no idle dream. Rev. A. M. Judy, pastor at Davenport, and president of the State Central Committee, writes: "The Davenport committee is already preaching to a larger congregation than the Davenport minister. Literature is sent weekly to about fifty correspondents, and by means of them is farther disseminated."

Have we not here a means of practical missionary work which may well be taken hold of by every Unitarian church? It seems to be practicable

everywhere. There would seem not to be a church in city or country that cannot engage in it with prospect of good results. Of course there will be failures. The enterprise is emphatically one that will not carry on itself, but will require in those who undertake it, faith, patience, persistence, labor, and a real love for doing good. But taken up in a true missionary spirit, and followed up faithfully, the Postoffice Mission would seem to promise much. With a fine enthusiasm, Mr. Judy writes: "What the horse and the lay-preacher have been to Methodism, such may the postal car and the lay-correspondent become to Unitarianism." *

A CAUTION: LIBERALIZING NOT ENOUGH!

The subject of Unitarian propagandism by means of the printed page, in all the ways that have been suggested, is one that may well engage the earnest attention of our churches and workers everywhere. However, one caution needs to be uttered in connection with it. That caution is, lest we too much trust to what books and papers and tracts can do, *as an end*, instead of thinking of their influence as only a means. Unitarians have talked a good deal about "liberalizing" and "leavening" the religious thought of the country. I would not say a word against such talking, for I think we have a mission of this kind to fulfill. And yet we should not forget that liberalizing and leavening work of itself may not be an unmixed good. There is always more or less of a doubtful side to such work, unless we can know what is to come after it. To make a man a Liberal in his beliefs, and then leave him with no Liberal associations and no helps in the new religious life upon which he has entered, may be to do him good, but at least it is not to do him the highest good. If he tries to find religious associations and helps in an orthodox church, he will be mightily tempted to suppress his real convictions and pass for what he is not—thus to injure himself by acting the half hypocrite, and at the same time to rob the truth of the witness which he ought to bear for it. While, if he attempts to live outside all churches, the danger will be that he fall into religious indifference. What is the remedy for these evils? The establishing of Unitarian churches; — churches into which those who have been liberalized by our books or tracts, or otherwise, may be gathered, to stand before the community for what they really are, and to be trained into a deepening and growing religious life. Our missionary work, then, even that done through the printed page, to accomplish its best results must keep constantly in mind, not simply the scattering of Liberal thought broadcast, important as this is, but, beyond this, just as fully and far as possible, definite church organization, church extension, church development, multiplying our churches everywhere as fast as we can, and gathering men and women into those we have as fast as we can. Thus we shall accomplish results in the highest degree tangible, real, enduring. Anything short of this is work at best incomplete.

RECAPITULATION.

I have thus pointed out with perhaps sufficient fulness and detail what seem to me the most important and practicable lines and forms of missionary work that present themselves to-day to our Unitarian churches. I call them important and practicable because they are not mere dreams and guesses; they have all been proved; they have all been done; they

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*For further information about the Postoffice Mission—plans of organization and work, literature, etc.—address Rev. A. M. Judy, Davenport, Iowa; Mrs. C. T. Cole, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; Miss Sarah Ellis, Bidgeway avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio; Miss J. E. McCaine, 194 Pleasant ave., St. Paul, Minn.; the Secretary of the Women's Western Conference, 135 Wabash avenue, Chicago; or the officers of any State or local Postoffice Mission committee.

are the outcome of actual experience—either my own or that of others. Of course, they are not all equally important; nor will all be found practicable in all places. Each society must study its own circumstances, and choose its own methods; but surely the time has come for every Unitarian church to face squarely the missionary problem, and to undertake definitely, regularly, earnestly, and every year, such kinds of missionary activity as may seem to its pastor, officers and members, wisest, and likely to accomplish the largest results. It has been with the hope of aiding some societies, in determining what they can do to best advantage, that I have pointed out so many kinds of practical missionary work that may be undertaken.

I have now essentially completed the task which I set before myself in undertaking this paper, namely, a careful and somewhat detailed consideration of the subject of missionary work in our churches—the need of it, the respective responsibility of ministry and membership concerning it, the conditions of success in it, and practical methods and agencies to be employed in its prosecution.

A thought or two more and I close.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL.

I have dwelt at considerable length in this pamphlet upon missionary methods and agencies, and conditions of missionary success; but I shall have failed seriously if I do not leave the thought clear in the minds of all, that the most important condition of success is a genuine *missionary spirit*, and that the best methods and agencies are dead and worthless things, only as they are filled with life and power by the same *spirit*. What is the missionary spirit? I suppose Jesus expressed the very soul of it when he said, "Freely ye have received, freely give." I suppose Paul felt it swelling in his heart when he exclaimed, "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel!" I suppose George Henry Lewes set forth the philosophy of it, in as far as it has a philosophy, when he wrote: "It is one of our noblest natural instincts, that we cannot feel within us the glory and power of a real conviction without earnestly striving to make that conviction pass into other minds." We see, then, from the very nature of the missionary spirit, why we should cultivate it, both in churches and individuals. James Martineau well says: "No Christian society can subsist upon its own internal relations alone, and like a monastery shut out the confusion and the cries of the world around. We acknowledge, with all Christendom, that the missionary spirit is inseparable from the religious life; and that it is impossible for a people to train themselves in the school of Christ, yet remain quiet neighbors to the victims of passion, ignorance, and wrong. Where there is no sorrow felt for those to whom God is dead and the heavens are dark, no pity for those whose life is a flight from pursuing Fate into the grim arms of 'the last enemy,' no longing to seek and to save the lost, how can there be either love of God or 'enthusiasm of humanity'? No Christian society gives any adequate expression of its essential character, unless from its heart goes forth some message of healing and entreaty to its neighborhood; and it is but a selfish membership that looks coldly on such evangelizing work."

GETTING BEYOND THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

Do any of us ever complacently congratulate ourselves that in our great *progress* we have got *beyond* the missionary spirit—or, as in our serene superiority we perhaps choose to call it, the "propagandist" spirit—and prefer to let people think for themselves and judge for themselves, without being influenced or prejudiced by us? "Prejudiced" by us! if we have *truth* to impart! What are we living for, only to cultivate "prej-

udice" in our own minds in favor of the true and the right, and to "influence" others in the same direction? Suppose we try the non-missionary theory, the non-prejudice theory, upon our children and refuse to "influence" them by teaching them science, or history, or good morals! Suppose, as Coleridge suggests, we stop "prejudicing" our gardens with hoes or seed-sowing! No! we shall hardly "progress" far enough to do this. Even the most advanced of us will continue to be propagandists in other matters. Why not, then, as regards religious truth? Said Jesus: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." If any of us are beyond the missionary spirit, we may, indeed, well feel that we are a long way on, for we are certainly beyond Jesus and Paul; and must I not add, beyond any very noble views of our duties and responsibilities to our fellows? If God has given us important truth, have we any right to keep it to ourselves? What is so precious in this world as truth? And what kind of truth is so precious as that which tends to widen man's spiritual horizon and ennoble his spiritual life?

There are two classes of Unitarians who never cease to be a marvel to me. The first class consists of those who, having attained to even an imperfect understanding of our conception of God and man, and what life is and may be, are yet content to live for themselves and their own narrow interests, and let pass unused the magnificent opportunities that crowd upon them all the while, to do good, to bless their fellow men, to help the noble causes in society which so much need help, to make the world better by their living in it. The second class consists of those who have risen to the height of putting mere self-interest under their feet, and are living with the constant noble aim in view of making their lives useful to their fellows, but who strangely confine their attention to men's bodies and intellects, to philanthropies which seek to relieve physical suffering, and to schools, education, science and the like, and are indifferent to the interests of men's moral and spiritual life, so that when appeals come to them to aid in the dissemination of the noble truth that Unitarianism stands for, they say, "We feel little interest in that." As if any beneficence could possibly be of more service to men than that which carries them a gospel which illuminates their sky with hope, furnishes them with the most powerful motives for right-living, supplies them with strength in temptation, gives them comfort in sorrow, robs death of its terror, fills this world for them with God's presence, and makes their lives sweet, glad, sacred—the vestibule of an infinite life.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT NOT THE SECTARIAN SPIRIT.

One more thought. In making the earnest plea I have made in this paper for Unitarian propagandism, let no one understand me as desiring to turn the thinking or the work of our body in any degree into the channels of a narrow sectarianism. My thought is the farthest possible from that. Unitarianism has always stood for breadth. I would have it stand for breadth in the future no less than it has done in the past. But the fact should be clearly understood that there is a foolish and false breadth, as well as a wise and true breadth. True breadth does not consist in standing for nothing, but in standing for things large and noble. And if we have things large and noble, it is no sign of breadth to be indifferent or careless about communicating them. Rather does true breadth prompt to give to others as widely and fully as possible of the good which we possess. If, as Unitarians, we have views of religious truth that are large, progressive, helpful to men, the broad-

minded and noble thing to do is to use all the means in our power to spread those views and make them prevail. Let us not be scared by that bugbear word, "sectarian." If we have certain important ends to accomplish, and can accomplish them best by banding together, then let us band together. And if people choose to call us a sect and say we are employing sectarian methods, let them do so. Of course, in a certain sense we are a sect: that is to say, we are a distinct religious body, or denomination —as we must be, in order to associate together, or co-operate at all. But sectarian in spirit, in the sense of desirous of cutting ourselves, or others, off from the largest truth, or from the broadest charity or religious fellowship, is certainly what I should be the last to desire Unitarianism to be. Rather would I have the aim of Unitarianism what it has always been, to enlarge the realms of religious light and love among men. So far is our gospel from desiring to create sectarianism in any narrow sense, that one of its weightiest claims to public regard arises from the fact that it aims distinctly at *destroying* such sectarianism, and in the only way, as I at least believe, that it can ever be destroyed, namely, by building up a religion too large for sectarianism, too simple, too ethical, too practical, too spiritual;—not a religion which cares not for truth, or which says one set of religious views is as good as another, but a religion which, refusing to lay down as fundamental or essential either forms, or rites, or ceremonies, or speculative beliefs,—the things out of which sectarian limitations always grow, —builds its superstructure solely upon the few deep, ineradicable, universal religious truths and instincts of the human soul, such as God, worship, duty, freedom of conscience, love — the things which transcend sectarianism, and tend, in the exact degree that they are empha sized, to make sectarianisms impossible.

Dr. Bellows used to say that the only way in which Unitarianism is sectarian is in its opposition to sectarianism. There is a great truth wrapped up in the saying. There are circumstances in which the only way men can secure peace is to fight for it. So there are circumstances, and we happen to be in the midst of such now, where the most promising way that seems to offer to promote non-sectarianism is to build up a denomination whose religious position shall be so broad and simple and self-evidencing, that it shall commend itself to the religious thought of the age; that it shall set an example; that it shall "criticise by creating"; that it shall shame men out of their sectarianisms by showing them something larger and better. Instead, therefore, of the desire of any of us to banish sectarianism from religion being something which should keep us from becoming missionaries, it seems to me that this very desire is exactly one of the motives which should most strongly urge us to increased missionary zeal, and a more earnest propogandism of our broad, rational gospel.

WILL UNITARIANISM BE EQUAL TO ITS GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

I began my paper with the inquiry, What is to be the future of Unitarianism? Will that future be important; or will it be unimportant? Will it realize our hopes; or will it miserably disappoint them? Will we, as a body, prove equal to the great responsibility that is placed upon us, of leadership in a religious reformation, more far-reaching and tremendous in its significance than any that has been known since the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century—nay, since the overthrow of the religions of ancient Greece and Rome, and the establishment of Christianity upon their ruins? Or will we prove unequal to our task, and must another body be raised up to take this magnifi-

cent leadership which is now so plainly offered to us,—a body with essentially our gospel, but able to lead where we were not, because possessed of more faith than we, more loyalty to truth, more zeal, more heroism, more unselfishness, more consecration to the service of God and man?

Everything indicates that it is rational religion — rational Christianity—the essential religion of Jesus and the early disciples, interpreted and illuminated by the growing knowledge of the modern world—the very religion which has been committed in so peculiar a sense to us as Unitarians, that must be in some form the religion of the future. But everything also indicates, quite as plainly, that the indispensable *condition* of such religion *becoming* the religion of the future is, that it shall first be set on fire in the hearts of mighty believers. That is to say, a body of men and women must appear, who so deeply feel its beauty, preciousness and power, and who are filled with so noble a spirit of unselfishness and zeal for doing good, that they cannot rest until with glowing faith and zeal they carry its teachings of light and joy and life to others near and far. Are the Unitarians of to-day such a body? Are we training up those who are coming after us to be such a body? These are solemn questions. What is the answer? Our enemies have long been answering no! Even men who can hardly be called enemies have answered the same. Said Matthew Arnold some years ago: "Unitarianism will never gain ground; Unitarians are not in earnest. They are a wealthy body, and might long ago have raised a hall and church at Oxford, which would have had great influence on religious life in England. But they never have done so, and, I think, never will; they have no faith in their belief, no zeal in spreading it." The painful thing about such utterances as these is, that there is more than a grain of truth in them, so far at least as the past is concerned. It has to be confessed that in our history, so far, we have not, as a body, developed the missionary spirit to any very marked degree.

However, does this necessarily indicate that we shall not in the future? Perhaps we may be helped to answer, if we remember that orthodox Protestantism was a hundred and fifty years old and more, before it became a missionary religion.

The truth is, it takes time for a new religious movement to discover itself, to adjust itself to itself, to find out what it is about, to think out its thought, to perfect its organizations, to create for itself a literature and a *cultus*, to know what it wants to do and can do. Less than half a hundred and fifty years have elapsed since Unitarianism had its birth as an organized movement in this country.

Starting as a pioneer in the extremest sense, with the realm of rational religion not even explored, with everything to do for itself and everything to create for itself, it is scarcely to be thought wonderful that we have not done more in a missionary way than we have—though what we have done is by no means to be despised. But now that our preliminary work is largely accomplished, we shall have no excuse for missionary inactivity in the future. From this time we ought to become a missionary religion to an extent vastly beyond anything in our past history.

Will we do it? Only God knows.

This, however, I think we may say for our encouragement, that the outlook is not all dark; indeed there seems to be in the sky no little of light. I think all the indications show that there is a more widespread and a more earnest missionary spirit among us than was ever known before. This is much. Now the question is, will we follow up this dawning promise of better things for our body with

wise and united and determined action through all our ranks?

This we ought to do. This we MUST do. With a more fervent consecration than we have ever known, let us say, "God helping us, this we WILL do."

"BEHOLD! I HAVE SET BEFORE THEE AN OPEN DOOR."

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